



CAPTivations

Success Stories in Prevention

June 2003



CAPTivations is a publication of CSAP's Southwest Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT) funded by cooperative agreement with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

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CSAP's Southwest CAPT is administered by the Southwest Prevention Center at the University of Oklahoma's College of Continuing Education. This document is printed at no cost to the taxpayers of the State of Oklahoma.

Area Prevention Resource Center/PreventionWorkz

Restaurants in Enid, OK, might find themselves struggling for customers if they don't become smoke-free restaurants, at least if PreventionWorkz has its way.

"When 10 people walk out of a restaurant because it allows smoking, it loses \$300," said Sean Byrne, executive director of PreventionWorkz. "That's a big influence."

PreventionWorkz, an Area Prevention Resource Center (APRC), has been in existence for 13 years, and used to be known as Meadowlark APRC. The name was changed four years ago, in part because people kept assuming Meadowlark was a hospital. A State Incentive Cooperative Agreement (SICA) grantee, PreventionWorkz has been trying to build its name recognition with several anti-smoking and anti-drinking campaigns.

Enid is the county seat of Garfield County, which has a population of about 46,000. The area is considered rural. However, Byrne observes that Enid has a more suburban feel to it because it is the center of commerce for northwest Oklahoma.

Enid is the home of Vance Air Force Base, which brings not only a permanent working population, but air force personnel who are being trained to fly. Those employed by the Air Force, Byrne said, are older than the typical first-time trainees, and they bring their spouses and families with them. "We get a lot of spouses who come who have good degrees and experience, but we only have access to them for a short period of time," he said.

Enid is also home to two hospitals, a lot of farms, and "old oil money," Byrne states. The county also has an anhydrous fertilizer plant, which coincidentally makes one of the ingredients used in manufacturing methamphetamines. Meth is a problem in the area, but the fertilizer used to make it tends to be stolen from farms, rather than the plant.

Alcohol tends to be a big problem among teens in Enid because they think that "it's just beer," Byrne said. Spit tobacco also is frequently used. Pot is another commonly abused drug, but people usually don't admit to

using it because of social norms against it: "This is the buckle of the Bible belt," Byrne explained.

One of PreventionWorkz's biggest pushes is to reduce youth access to tobacco. Thanks to one of the staff members, Barbara Patterson, tobacco prevention specialist, they have begun a comprehensive effort to make all restaurants in the county smoke-free.

To counteract messages from those promoting smoking sections in restaurants, Ms. Patterson and her friends work to help restaurant owners understand the cost of hosting a smoking section. Her group offers a message encouraging restaurant owners to gain additional business from those preferring a smoke-free

environment. Given the increasing social norm toward smoke free public places, hosting a smoking section actually costs business owners more in lost business than providing a smoke-free environment.

PreventionWorkz has produced and distributed a guide to smoke-free restaurants. So far, 48 are

listed, as well as six restaurants located at Oakwood Mall.

"Simple separation of smokers and nonsmokers within the same airspace may reduce, but does not eliminate, exposure

of nonsmokers to environmental tobacco smoke," the pamphlet states. The pamphlet also reports that second hand smoke can cause lung cancer in nonsmokers, can be a health

threat to people who already have heart and lung

"Simple separation of smokers and nonsmokers within the same airspace may reduce, but does not eliminate... tobacco smoke"



disease, will increase the risk of serious lung disease in children under age two; and will increase the incidence of colds, bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections, and asthma in children.

PreventionWorkz also runs a program to urge retailers not to sell cigarettes to minors. Youth under age 18 go into the establishment with an adult, and the youth attempts to buy cigarettes. If the retailer asks for identification, the adult shows up at the counter and congratulates him or her for following the law.

If, however, the retailer doesn't ask for an ID, the youth states he or she left money in the car and goes out, ostensibly to get the money. Then the adult comes up and reminds the retailer about the importance of "ID-ing" youth who want to buy cigarettes, telling the retailer if this had been an actual sale, he or she could have been fined. The adult also leaves educational material and signs and stickers the retailer can use to advertise that the establishment will ID young people attempting to buy cigarettes.

The local police have been strongly supportive of PreventionWorkz's youth buy program. The police don't have the personnel to perform such stings themselves, Byrne said, so they appreciate the help they get from the prevention coalition.

This summer, the coalition will start youth alcohol buys, involving youth ages 17 to 20, and follow the same format as the youth cigarette buys.

The coalition's SWAT program—Students Working Against Tobacco—recently was able to get a van with the help of an Enid physicians group. The van is decorated with SWAT logos and anti-tobacco messages, and will be brought to high school football games, the local

water park, and other places where youth hang out.

"This vehicle has its windows whited out in the back, ground lights, and a really kickin' sound system," Byrne states. "The kids are designing it themselves with help from the Autry Tech Center."

Another project, which the coalition inherited about 10 years ago Teens Need Teens (TNT). TNT is a drama group that does skits on the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs for students and adults. One of their most recent activities was a series of public service announcements (PSAs)

with "Mr. Tobacco," who is portrayed as a representative of the tobacco industry.

The PSAs emphasize the role of the tobacco industry in the destruction and death brought about as a result of smoking.

"This is an award-winning drama troupe, and is recognized around the state," Byrne observes. "They are from local schools all over the county, and they are all high school youth."

For the adults, PreventionWorkz produces a monthly show, airing twice a week for that month, on the local cable access channel. It's hosted by local personality Bill Presley, and focuses on a different prevention issue each month, addressing education of the community, how to change norms, and how to address environmental policies related to substance use.

"We get a great response," Byrne said. "People know us and our name. And we can reach so many more people. At a (live) presentation, we might have 30 to 40 participants, while TV at the minimum reaches 10 times that amount, even if they are just clicking by and see a familiar face."

These strategies, in concert with Botvin's Life Skills Training in the schools, appear to be having an impact on youth's use and perception of drugs. Between 1999 and 2001-02, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in Garfield County, the percentage of students who had ridden with a drunk driver dropped from 38.45% to 33.93 percent. The number of youth who have tried cigarettes dropped from 73.06% to 66.89 percent. Lifetime use of marijuana, inhalants, methamphetamines, and steroids also dropped. The number of students who were offered, sold, or given illegal drugs on school property also dropped nearly 2% to 16.18%.

"The van is decorated with SWAT logos and anti-tobacco messages"

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Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
www.samhsa.gov/centers/csap/csap.html

Decision Support System
www.preventiondss.org

Join Together
www.jointogether.org

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
www.cadca.org

CSAP's Model Programs
<http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov>

For this community success story and others from across the Southwest region, visit our website at <http://www.swcapt.org/products/success.html>

